8. To identify priorities and themes with regard to display of captive animals in a zoo.

9. to coordinate research and training

10. to provide technical assistance to zoos for their proper management on scientific lines.

(c) (i) Rules for recognition of zoos have been framed.

(ii) Process of evaluation of recognition of the zoo in India has been initiated.

Central Zoo Authority has initiated action in pursuance of its aforementioned objectives and comprehensive; recognition of Zoo Rules have been framed under Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 as amended in 1991.

Botanical Survey of India

1702. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a standing agreement between the Staff Side and the Government to the effect that Chartered bus services from different points in Calcutta to Botanical Survey of India, Calcutta would be into service for the benefit of the staff and scientists of BSI;

(b) if so, the reason for reported non grant of permission to grant subsidy to accept the lowest tender offered by an operator to run the said bus services; and

(c) whether Government propose to allow the Botanical Survey of India to accept the lowest tender and continue the operation of Chartered Bus services for the benefit of Staff and Scientists of BSI?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (b): In 1974, the Government of India, in the then Department of Science & Technology: had agreed, on a representation made by the staff of the Botanical Survey of India (BSI), to hire chartered buses for the transportation of the staff from Calcutta to Howrah; following the shifting of some portion of the office of the BSI to the Indian Botanic Garden at Howrah. The original arrangement provided for chartering of buses from the Calcutta State Transport Corporation @ Rs. 25|- per month per person for the staff members who wished to make use of this facility. This was a non-subsidised arrangement.

However, over subsequent years the original arrangements were changed and increases in the rate of hire of buses were permitted to the extent that the arrangement could no longer be regarded as non-subsidised The necessity for providing transport has also been reduced with the shift of the headquarters of the BSI from Howrah to Calcutta. It is expected that with the construction of the new bridge over the river Hooghly, traffic congestions would ease. It also appears that no such facility is available to the employees of other Government departments in Calcutta. In any case, subsidy on transport is not permitted under present Government rules.

Keeping all these factors in mind, Government has directed the BSI to terminate the former arrangements with effect from 1.4.93.

(c) Does not arise

Gas Leakage from Chemical Plants in Thane, Maharashtra

1703. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that due to gas leakage from chemical plants in Thane, Maharashtra 11 persons were affected in the second week of March, 1993; if so, the details of the incident;

(b) whether any action has been taken against the factory owner, if so; the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) An accident took place at M/s Century Rayon Shahad District Thane, Maharashtra on March 17, 1993 due to the failure of the Spinbath Recirculation System and consequent overflow of the Spinbath Storage tanks containing hazardous substances. This sudden failure of the process was due to the tripping in the Captive Power Supply and failure in the automatic switch over to grid. Highly acidic effluent containing toxic substances was released from the factory in the open drain which caused the death of 10 persons and left 122 persons injured.

(b) The Government has taken the following actions against the offending industrial unit;

(i) Executive President, Senior Vice President, General Manager (Operations) and Senior Manager (Safety, Health and Environment) of the factory were arrested under the provisions of the Indian Penal Code.

(ii) Orders have been issued by the State Government under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for closure of the Spinbath Unit involved in accident until measures on Safety are implemented to the satisfaction of the Government.

(iii) Directions have been issued to the District Collector, Thane for providing immediate relief to the victims of the accident under the provisions of the Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991.

(c) Does not arise.

Lifting the ban on the export of wild and endangered plants etc.

1704. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the recent lifting of the ban on the export of wild and endangered plants land and timber for commercial purposes is in contravention of the Wildlife Protection Act and the spirit of the Biodiversity Convention signed by Government at Rio in 1992; and

(b) what steps Government intend to take to save the endangered flora and fauna of the country from destruction for temporary commercial gain?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) The ban on the export of wild and endangered plant species and timber for commercial purposes to the extent applicable earlier has not been lifted. The export policy of wildife products are inter alia subject to wild life (Protection) Act also. The various measures taken by Government to save endangered flora and fauna of the country include:—

(i) A net work of protected areas have been established in the country.

(ii) The Wild Life (Protection) Act has been comprehensively amended to provide better protection to the wild heritage of India and the punishments for violations of the act have been made more stringent.

(iii) The State Governments are extended financial assistance in their efforts of protection and conservation of wildlife in the country.

(iv) Commercial exploitation of forest produce from protected areas is banned.